(c) the proposal of Government for alternative source of earnings for persons who would become redundant?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) The Hon'ble Supreme Court have upheld the rules for introduction of High Security Registration Plates *vide* their judgment dated 30.11.2004.

(b) The Ministry has no information in this regard.

(c) the objective underlying the introduction of High Security Registration Plates is to enhance safety of vehicles on the roads through improved visibility as also improve the security of vehicles by introducing a number of security feature in Registration Plates, which would make removal, tampering or counterfeiting of such plates difficult. It has nothing to do with employment.

Development of Indian Ports

3212. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that we are lagging far behind in the development of Indian ports and in providing them with basic facilities of international standard as compared to that of China and East Asia;

(b) whether it is also a fact that despite the various effects the waiting period of ships is twice as compared to that of the said countries;

(c) if so, the details of the efforts made by Government for the development of Indian ports; and

(d) if not, the comparative details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) There is no reliable system of benchmarking and/or universally accepted set of parameters on the basis of which the performance of various ports could be juxtaposed for arriving at definitive conclusions. However, in spite of steady improvement in the performance and efficiency of the major ports in India, these still lag behind globally comparable standards.

(c) Development of the major ports in India is an on-going process keeping in view the demands of maritime trade. An outlay of Rs. 4531.29 crore has been provided under the Tenth Plan for Development of the major

ports. In addition, private sector investment to the tune of Rs. 11257 crore is also envisaged for development of major ports during the Tenth Plan period. The schemes for development of the major ports include deepening of channels to facilitate berthing of large size vessels, construction of new berths, upgradation/expansion of existing berths, modernization of cargo handling equipments through fresh procurement as also upgradation/ replacement of existing equipments, improvement in storage capacities, upgradation of internal circulation systems for smooth cargo movement within the port area, improved rail and road connectivity to hinterland, etc.

(d) Does not arise.

Road improvement work in Punjab

3213. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of National Highways in Punjab where the work regarding widening, extension and repair of the roads are in progress as on date and where work is likely to be started in near future;

(b) the status report in each case;

(c) by when the work is likely to be completed;

(d) whether Government propose to reconstruct some old over-bridges on National Highways passing through Punjab; and

(e) if so, the details of such over-bridges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) to (c) Repairs and development of National Highways is a continuous process and works are taken up for execution depending upon the inter-se priorities of the works and availability of resources. However, status report of sanctioned works on various national Highways along with works likely to be started and to be completed is enclosed as statement (*See* below).

(d) and (e) Reconstruction of old over bridges in Punjab may be undertaken, if required, by National Highways Authority of India as a part of four laning works entrusted to them.